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rare. In the genus *Viola*, for example, plants with cleistogamous flowers will normally produce both autosperms and xenosperms. In *Polygala*, species exist capable, from the ecological relations of their flowers, of producing a greater variety of seeds. These would differ essentially in their manner of development, while resembling each other structurally to such a degree that they would be indistinguishable by any of the ordinary tests. Furthermore, it may very well be that the xenosperm borne on a stock which is itself the development from a xenosperm will differ intrinsically from the xenosperm which is borne upon a geitonospermous or autospermous stock. Thus a new element of complexity is brought in and an explanation is perhaps afforded of so-called "sports" or mutations. Here also may be an explanation of certain genera which include large numbers of closely related "species." May it not be possible that in a species there will be distinctive xenosperm, autosperm, geitonosperm, and parthenosperm varieties, the continual production of which gives an appearance of *related species* rather than of special seed varieties? For example, would this explain *Crataegus*, *Rubus*, and *Hieracium*? And may not the mutation forms of *De Vries* be plants which have arisen from rare and unusual seed-types, developed, however, in accordance with the laws of plant reproduction?

In any event the consideration of the regular causes that underlie the observed individuality of seeds may lead to useful results in plant-breeding. It seems very certain that to regard seeds as necessarily equivalent because borne upon the same stock is a grave and positive error. They may even pass all the ordinary tests and yet be extremely unlike, so much so that they will upon development give rise to plants so different that they may rightly be classed as different species. Returning to the analogy mentioned above, it would seem as if there were no more reason to deny individuality to the seeds borne in a head of grain, upon *prima facie* evidence, than there would be to deny the individual character of each household in a city.
—CONWAY MACMILLAN, *University of Minnesota*.

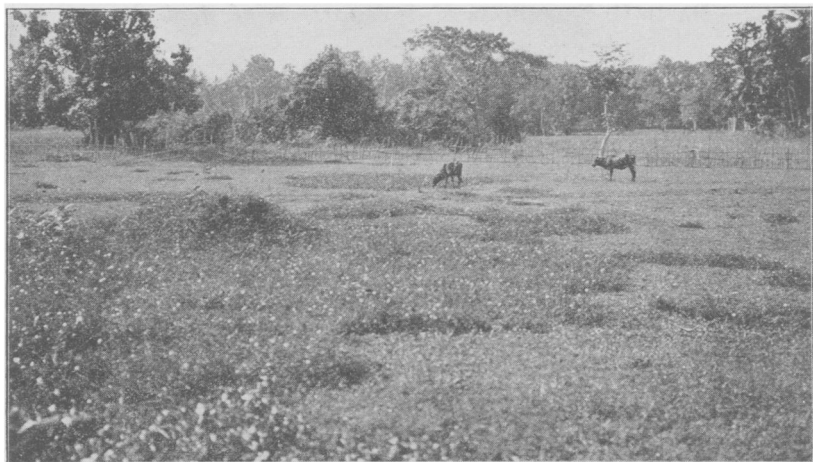
THE SENSITIVE PLANT AS A WEED IN THE TROPICS.

(WITH ONE FIGURE)

EVERYONE who has traveled much in the tropics knows that *Mimosa pudica* is a weed which gives considerable trouble to the

planters, but so far as I am aware no photographs of the way it luxuriates have been published. It may be interesting to those who have not seen the plant in its own home to look at a photographic reproduction of a large patch of it which I observed recently in Ceylon.

I was returning from Peradeniya to Colombo and the train stopped for a few minutes at a way station in the lowlands, an hour's ride from the city, just long enough, in fact, to allow me to get a snap-shot



Mimosa pudica, as it grows luxuriantly in Ceylon.

of a field quite disfigured by *Mimosa*. The cattle pastured in the field had eaten the herbage closely around the plant, leaving it strictly alone, and as it crept across the meadow it killed out all other plants, forming a dense deep patch of spiny, creeping stems and delicate pink blossoms, which resembled miniature dandelion or thistle heads gone to seed.

The leaves were all expanded horizontally as I approached, but when my feet shook the soft earth, like a hermit crab draws into its shell, or a coral pulls in its tentacles, the plants, in the radius of the shaken ground, quickly folded their leaflets together and dropped their leaves into the characteristic position of rest which everyone knows who has seen the living plant.

To one acquainted only with the delicate specimens in European and American greenhouses, the novelty of walking over such beds of

it in the tropics does not soon wear off. I have been on railway lines whose embankments were covered with *Mimosa*, and watched with keen amusement, as the train advanced, the quick falling of the leaves like the progress of a roller on the seacoast.

In Ceylon the planters complain that it is among their most troublesome weeds, and one sees it everywhere in the cocoanut groves and tea plantations. Though highly interesting and valuable in a botanical laboratory, *Mimosa pudica* is quite useless on a tropical estate.—DAVID G. FAIRCHILD, *U. S. Department of Agriculture*.